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INFO RUCNCAN/ALL CANADIAN POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNOSC/ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY COOPERATION IN EUROPE PRIORITY
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 1492
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0526
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0139
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1323

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 OTTAWA 000273

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR DRL/IRF, WHA/CAN

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: CANADA FIGHTING ANTI-SEMITISM WHILE INCIDENTS
RISING AT HOME

REF: A. 08 OTTAWA 497

[1](#)B. 08 OTTAWA 123

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: According to B'nai Brith Canada, white supremacists, radical Muslims, and far leftists are uniting to promote anti-Semitic propaganda in Canada. A recent B'nai Brith report claimed that the current economic crisis had spurred an upsurge in anti-Semitic incidents over the last four months of 2008. Callers reported 1,135 incidents of assault, vandalism, and harassment to the B'nai Brith hotline in 2008, an 8.9 pct increase from 2007. Police laid charges in fifteen cases. Universities have become increasingly hostile environments for Jewish students, according to community leaders. Government officials have underscored that Canada is at the forefront of international efforts to fight anti-Semitism, and sent a large delegation led by Immigration Minister Jason Kenney to the February Interparliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism (ICCA) conference in London. End summary.

ECONOMIC CRISIS FUELS UPSURGE IN INCIDENTS

[1](#)2. (U) On March 31, B'nai Brith Canada's League for Human Rights released its 2008 Audit of anti-Semitic Incidents and separately presented a copy of the report to the Charge. B'nai Brith Canada's hotline fielded 1,135 reports of anti-Semitic incidents in 2008, an increase of 8.9 pct from 2007 (ref a). Victims reported more than one-quarter of these incidents to the police, who laid charges in fifteen cases. The 2008 incidents included physical assault (Sainte-Agathe, Quebec), vandalism of Jewish community centers and synagogues (Edmonton, Toronto, Kelowna, Regina, Montreal, Saskatoon), graffiti calling for killing Jews (Winnipeg), and chants of "death to Jews" at public rallies (McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario). B'nai Brith officials commented that, with the Jewish community making up less than 1 pct of the total Canadian population (according to the 2006 Census), there is a disproportionate targeting of the Jewish community. (B'nai Brith has used the same definitions of acts of anti-Semitic violence, vandalism and harassment for the past 27 years.)

[1](#)3. (SBU) According to B'nai Brith, almost half the incidents took place in the last four months of 2008, which it attributed to the economic recession and widespread coverage of the Bernard Madoff financial scandal. B'nai Brith Executive Vice President Frank Dimant told the Charge that white supremacists, radical Muslims, and far leftists are uniting behind an anti-Semitic banner. Dimant suggested that by late December 2008, the economic crisis and war in

Gaza had provided a "perfect storm" for promoting hatred of Jews, with university campuses becoming a hostile environment for Jewish students. There was widespread media coverage of an incident on February 11 at York University in Toronto, where a mob chanting anti-Jewish slogans blockaded students at the campus Hillel.

CANADA LEADING THE FIGHT AT HOME AND ABROAD

¶4. (U) Jewish leaders have praised Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his government for speaking out forcefully about anti-Semitism. Minister for Citizenship, Immigration, and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney led a twelve-member Canadian delegation to the February 2009 Interparliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism (ICCA) conference in London, where Kenney announced that Canada would host the next ICCA gathering in 2010. Liberal MP Irwin Cotler, a former Minister of Justice and Attorney General, served on the conference's steering committee. Also attending were Liberal MPs Bob Rae (Foreign Affairs "critic"), Anita Neville, Carolyn Bennett, Raymonde Folco, Hedy Fry, and Joyce Murray; Conservative MPs Randy Hoback, James Lunney, and Scott Reid; and Liberal Senator Jerry Grafstein.

¶5. (U) Canada has applied to become a full member of the International Task Force on Holocaust Research, Education, and Commemoration. The government's Community Historical Recognition Program (CHRP) has included a C\$2.5 million commemorative fund to educate future generations about Canada's refusal to accept hundreds of Jewish European refugees aboard the SS St. Louis as it arrived in Halifax

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harbor in 1938.

¶6. (U) In January 2008, Canada was the first country to announce it would not attend the 2009 UN Durban Review Conference on Racism (Durban II), noting that the 2001 Conference had degenerated into an anti-Semitic hate-fest (ref b).

¶7. (U) The Department of Public Safety is providing C\$3 million for a pilot program to enhance security for Jewish community institutions in the wake of an increase in vandalism and threats in recent years. In 2008, almost twenty Jewish institutions received funding under this program. In the 2008 election campaign, the opposition Liberal Party pledged C\$75 million for a similar program if it formed the next government.

NEW TECHNIQUES

¶8. (SBU) The B'nai Brith report also noted a 30 pct increase in Internet and electronic-based hate involving new media such as social blogs, social networking sites, online videos, and text messaging. The report also noted new forms of bigotry "masquerading" as anti-Zionism. December 2008, which coincided with Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza, saw the highest volume of incidents. The March 2009 "Israeli Apartheid Week" (IAW) poster depicted an Israeli helicopter deliberately targeting a Palestinian child holding a teddy bear. (Note: Both Carleton University and Ottawa University prohibited the poster noting that it infringed their own human rights policy and the Ontario Human Rights Code. End note.) IAW began in Toronto in 2005 and has since spread to over two dozen cities around the world. B'nai Brith officials told Charge that IAW is spreading to high schools, and expressed concern that Muslim groups with whom they have worked in the past, such as the Canadian Arab Federation (CAF), are increasingly radicalized. Community leaders have called for greater attention to universities, claiming that events such as IAW have contributed to a climate where students are afraid to identify themselves as Jewish or to

express their opinions for fear of physical and verbal assault.

MOST INCIDENTS IN ONTARIO

¶9. (U) Ontario's 682 anti-Semitic incidents represented 60 pct of all incidents reported in Canada, a 17 pct increase from 2007, according to the B'nai Brith report. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) alone accounted for 538 incidents. According to the report, the Toronto Police recorded 153 hate-related incidents in 2008, with Jews the most targeted group (45 incidents). The number of incidents reported in the Toronto suburb of Thornhill, an area with a significant Jewish population, more than doubled from the 25 cases in ¶2007.

CONVICTIONS IN QUEBEC

¶10. (U) Quebec experienced a 72 pct increase in reported vandalism from the 44 cases in 2007, according to B'nai Brith. A quarter of the incidents occurred in July and August ¶2008. B'nai Brith explained this in part as prejudice against members of the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community who vacation in the countryside each summer. In October 2008, an assailant threw bricks through the windows of a Montreal synagogue. In February 2009, Omar Bulphred, one of two individuals charged in connection with the firebombing of a Montreal Jewish school in September 2006 and Jewish community center in April 2007, received a seven-year ¶community center in April 2007, received a seven-year sentence after pleading guilty. In November 2008, his co-conspirator, Azim Ibragimov, had received a four-year sentence.

EPISODES IN WESTERN CANADA

¶11. (U) In July 2008, Mustafa Taj received a one year jail sentence (with credit for time served) for his 2006 Calgary attack on a Jewish teenager and her three friends, one of whom he pushed from a station platform onto train tracks.

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According to media reports, the 21-year old Taj shouted "I'm Muslim and hate Jews" while assaulting his victims. The report also noted an increased presence of white supremacist groups on the streets of Calgary, including a "White Pride" march in the city's downtown in March 2008.

¶12. (U) British Columbia continued an upward five-year trend in incidents, with 80 reported anti-Semitic incidents, a 31 pct increase from 2007, according to the B'nai Brith report. In February 2008, the British Columbia Supreme Court convicted Bill Noble of Internet hate crimes, the province's second ever conviction for this offense. Noble was accused of "willfully promoting hatred against identifiable groups, namely Jews, Blacks, homosexual or gay persons, non-whites and persons of mixed race or ethnic origin," and received a sentence of six months imprisonment, followed by three years probation.

¶13. (U) In February 2009, a Saskatchewan provincial court acquitted former aboriginal leader David Ahenakew of a hate crime charge following comments he made in a 2002 speech and interview that Hitler was right when he "fried six million of those guys." The provincial court judge ruled that Ahenakew may not have intended to incite hatred since his comments appeared spontaneous. The Crown will not appeal the acquittal, according to media reports.

COMMENT: "RESPECT CANADIAN VALUES"

¶14. (SBU) The Canadian government has vigorously condemned

anti-Semitism at home and abroad, and brought the perpetrators of the 2006-2007 Montreal Jewish community firebombings to justice. The government's decision to host the 2010 ICCA gathering, and its domestic pilot program to improve security at Jewish institutions, show its understanding of the threat. Minister Kenney has consistently called for all residents to respect "traditional Canadian values" of peaceful coexistence and tolerance.

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